

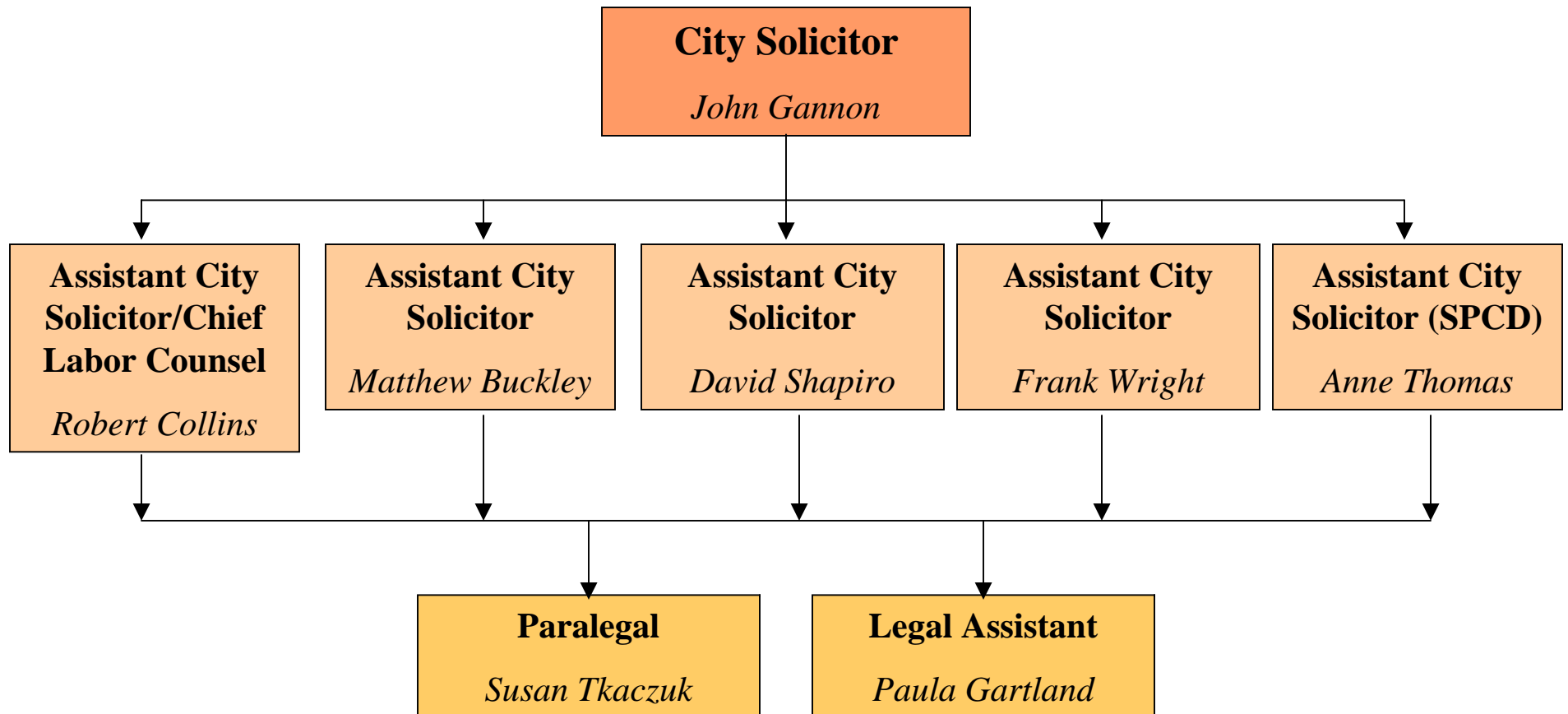
FY08 SOMERVILLE BUDGET HEARINGS

Law Department

John Gannon, City Solicitor



2. Law Organizational Chart



3. LAW – Some FY07 Activities

- Fought for the equal recognition of the marriages performed for out-of-state same-sex couples, leading to limited court recognition of such marriages
- Launched claims against the Cartoon Network for City's costs relative to responding to multiple bomb hoax scares in City and region and negotiated settlement for City for \$70,000
- Played an active role in the collective bargaining negotiations with unions working for the School Department for the first time in the City's history
- Provided legal support for City's transportation initiatives, including expansion of Green Line, building of a new Orange Line station and reconstruction of Somerville Avenue
- Conducted sensitive investigations of claims brought by City employees
- Initiated and conducted training of City employees and members of the public on sexual harassment, municipal code enforcement, new laws relating to fire protection, public records law and state ethics issues
- Drafted a Memorandum of Agreement with DCR providing the City with control and operation of Dilboy Memorial Stadium, which was cited as a model agreement in shared state and local parks management

4. LAW – FY07 Accomplishments & Initiatives

1. During FY07, the Law Department continued cost-saving initiatives and furthered its mission of providing top-notch municipal legal representation, all with a budget that represented a 20% reduction from the prior fiscal year. The hiring of the in-house labor attorney, whose salary was transferred from the Personnel Department's legal services line-item, yielded the City a savings of over \$100,000 during the fiscal year that would have been spent on contracted labor law firms.
2. During FY07, the Law Department took a lead role in the permitting of the Assembly Square economic development initiative. To date, during FY07, due to the agreements, board approvals and achievement of many milestones, the developer has conveyed to the City over \$2.5 million in new revenue that the City would not otherwise have received.

5. LAW – FY07 Accomplishments & Initiatives

3. Noteworthy cost-savings initiatives undertaken by the Law Department in FY07 include the solicitation of bids for contracted legal services to ensure the cost effectiveness of outside counsel and the voluntary provision of legal services by the Office to encourage, facilitate, and develop non-profit charitable corporations that could be utilized to raise funds to supplement City departments and initiatives.
4. Notably also, the Law Department has resolved to the City's advantage a number of backlogged litigation matters in FY07, including the Assembly Square court and administrative agency cases. Through the Law Department's proactive problem-solving approaches, the City has realized a remarkable decline over the past three years in the filing of new potentially costly cases against the City, such that the Law Department requested for FY07 a significant overall budget decrease and is requesting a similar budget for FY08.

6. LAW – FY08 Goals

1. In FY08, the Law Department will continue to provide the City with high quality, informed legal services and personal attention in a timely manner.
2. The Department will continue its goal of handling as many matters in-house as possible.
3. Other initiatives that the Law Department plans for FY08 include:
 - partnering with the Personnel Department to create an employee newsletter,
 - increasing training opportunities for staff,
 - increasing the number of legal-based trainings provided to City employees.

7. LAW – FY08 Goals

4. Some specific Law Department goals include:

- Facilitating the development of Assembly Square into the mixed use, transit-oriented development envisioned by the City;
- Supporting quality economic development initiatives to bring the City new growth revenues;
- Maximizing a timely Green Line extension;
- Ensuring that the Commonwealth fulfills its funding commitments relative to the Argenziano School at Lincoln Park;
- Serving as a proactive counsel and providing prompt attention to resolving;
- Investigating smaller issues when they occur in an attempt to continue the reduction of new and costly lawsuits against the City.

8. ACE Service Project

ACE Service Project: Accurate, Courteous, Easy Service from your City government.

“The mission of this project is to respond accurately and efficiently to constituent needs, while treating each customer with courtesy and respect, and constantly improving the ease of doing business with city government.” ~Mayor Joseph Curtatone, 2007 Midterm Address

The Law Department strives to meet the ACE goals by:

- Placing relevant documents on the Somerville City Intranet page to facilitate inter-departmental transactions. (ongoing)
- Partnering with the Personnel Department to create an employee newsletter. (FY08)
- Increasing training opportunities for staff. (FY08)
- Increasing the number of legal-based trainings provided to City employees. (FY08)